

The Essential Of Pakistan Current Foreign Policy.

By: Rabia Ahmed

Introduction:

“A country's foreign policy (also called the international relations policy) is a set of goals about how the country will work with other countries economically, politically, socially and militarily. Foreign policy also involves dealing with groups that are not countries but that are still important. These are called non-state actors and might include religious groups, large companies, or even terrorist groups. The study of foreign relations is known as foreign policy analysis (FPA) and the work is called diplomacy. Most countries have a foreign minister who directs these things.

- **Foreign Policy Challenges After Election 2018 :**

A well-formulated foreign policy is essential in an age of globalization when new challenges have emerged.

A coherent, well-formulated and popularly supported foreign policy is essential, especially in an age of **globalization** when new and daunting challenges have emerged. Foreign policy cannot be seen in isolation, for it is only a reflection of a country's domestic policy. The two are linked inextricably, as foreign policy cannot be effective and credible unless backed by a domestic policy that promotes harmony and good governance at home.

The preceding sentences are drawn from the PML-N's electoral manifesto in 2013. They make for sensible reading. But 'National Security and Foreign Policy' was only the 12th section in the PML-N manifesto of 14 parts. And while the measures and initiatives the PML-N pledged to undertake were mostly non-controversial, attempting to assert itself in the national security and foreign policy domains proved disastrous for the PML-N government, and may have contributed to Nawaz Sharif's ouster. In hindsight, the collision between the military-led establishment and the Sharif-led PML-N government may have been foretold in the party's election manifesto. "Pakistan today is at war within, while isolated abroad," the 2013 manifesto stated. "Consequently, a deep malaise afflicts the country; its social, economic and political schisms creating grave doubts and misgivings even in the minds of our friends."

In 2018, the challenges in the national security and foreign policy domains remain numerous and complex. But there are significant opportunities too. Whichever party or coalition takes charge of the federal government after the elections, the conduct of foreign policy will be fundamental to its success.

The internal dimension i.e. managing civil-military relations will perhaps be as important as the external dimension. Ultimately, much will depend on how Pakistan manages its ties with four countries: China, the US, Afghanistan and India.

CPEC And Pak China Relation :

China is central to Pakistan's medium-term economic future. As a maturing world power, its importance in regional security will grow. With CPEC an original pillar of the Belt and Road Initiative, many of the early CPEC-related projects set to mature during the next parliament's term and Pakistan almost certainly needing external financial aid, the economic dimension of the relationship will need further attention. In particular, the growing criticism that the PML-N government was unnecessarily secretive and opaque in agreements reached with China and that the commercial terms of many agreements may not be favourable to Pakistan needs to be addressed.

Surely, given both states' commitment to strong bilateral ties, an economic rebalancing can be achieved in a constructive manner. In addition, Pakistan should heed the well-meaning Chinese advice that the regional security environment is improved. The Chinese examples of developing robust trade ties with India and not allowing the Doklam stand-off to derail ties are instructive.

The growing economic and military strength of South and West Asia and of regional countries should be seen as an opportunity for engagement for Pakistan just as China has done.

The deepening of Pakistan's ties with China contrasts poorly with the worsening of ties with the US. President Donald Trump has proved as disruptive as candidate Trump had promised, and in the case of Pakistan, there has been a downturn in ties. America's so-called South Asia strategy announced in 2017 and Mr Trump's New Year Day tweet combined with the state here bristling at the tone and substance of some of the American accusations against it have caused ties to further deteriorate.

The Afghan Problem:

If there is to be an improvement, it will almost certainly centre on Afghanistan. There Pakistan continues to have a historic opportunity to help put an end to what next year will be 40 years of near-continuous war. The next government's focus should be to work with the military leadership to help achieve a political settlement in Kabul with the Afghan Taliban. Lasting stability in Afghanistan is the stated desired outcome for all actors and it is within the realm of possibility.

- **Indian Issue :**

Recent overture by our military leadership should be taken seriously and the civilian government that takes charge after the election should move quickly to try and restore dialogue with India. It is not clear if Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will easily accept a fresh Pakistani outreach to his government, but the logic of engagement and dialogue must eventually prevail. All this will hopefully be reflected in the new manifestos. May the next government achieve more than its predecessors on the foreign policy front.

- **Setting Foreign Policy :**

The Foreign Office needs serious, full-time and empowered political leadership — a reality that PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif ignored for a full parliamentary term between 2013 and 2018.

So, it is welcome that the new PTI foreign minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, has immediately faced the media and attempted to give the country and the outside world an indication of the PTI government's approach to and priorities in the foreign policy domain.

“Let me be clear: the foreign policy will be made here, at the Foreign Office of Pakistan,” Mr Qureshi has commendably stated. He also indicated his preferred approach to healing the civil-military divide: “I will engage with all the institutions for the betterment of the country. It is the policy across the world. Feedback is sought from national security institutions.”

Taken together, Mr Qureshi's comments suggest that the PTI will indeed seek to increase the space civilians have in the foreign policy and national security domains and that it will do so by engaging in an inter-institutional dialogue.

If the PTI is to succeed in crafting a civilian-led foreign policy, Mr Qureshi and his boss, Prime Minister Imran Khan, will also have to develop a coherent strategic vision. All newly installed governments have talked of dialogue, good neighbourly relations and a focus on trade. But the strategic environment that Pakistan must contend with is fraught with risk and needs careful management.

Even in a relationship as seemingly rock solid and on a path to greater strategic convergences than ever as with China, there are serious financial issues in CPEC projects that will have to be resolved. Mr. Qureshi's claim that his government's new foreign policy will “begin and end at Pakistan” seemingly a version of US President Donald Trump's ‘America first’ policy will be quickly tested by both friend and rival.

India, Afghanistan and the US are perennial challenges for Pakistan to deal with and the PTI ought to be prepared for bruising discussions on an array of issues. The PTI government could benefit from Mr Qureshi's tenure as PPP foreign minister in that regard. Perhaps what the PTI's foreign policy team should keep in mind is that much will depend on how engaged Prime Minister Khan remains and the overall state of the civil-military relationship. Mr Khan's politics has long revolved around a mostly, arguably wholly, domestic agenda. A victory speech the day after the general election was widely welcomed perhaps because for the first time Mr Khan had spoken in some detail about his foreign policy vision.

So, if Mr Qureshi is to have a successful term as foreign minister, he will need the regular engagement of his boss, the prime minister, particularly when it comes to forging an inter-institutional consensus on key foreign policy and national security issues. It will be difficult, but it is possible.

- **The Dilemma Of Pakistan's Foreign Policy:**

Speaking earlier this year at the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs on "Continuing Search for Stability: Pakistan and Afghanistan," noted Pakistani author Ahmed Rashid was quoted as saying by Dawn that Pakistan has made two "grievous mistakes" in its foreign policy. The first came at the end of the Cold War, he said, when Pakistan decided to "move proxy resources to Kashmir," radicalizing the Kashmiri nationalist movement."

The second major error, according to Rashid, came in 2003 when General Pervez Musharraf decided to resurrect the Afghan Taliban. This proved a shot in the arm for the Pakistani Taliban, and within several years local militants in Pakistan were "calling for the overthrow of the Pakistani state." Increasingly, Pakistan was being accused by neighbouring countries of providing safe sanctuaries for militants on Pakistani soil.

In the wake of the Taliban's assault on Peshawar's Army Public School at the end of 2014, it was widely believed that both the civil and military leadership of Pakistan were keen to improve bilateral relations with its neighbours. The army launched a robust crackdown on militant groups in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and elsewhere in the country. As a result, complaints from Pakistan's neighbours eased, even if they didn't quite disappear entirely. Meanwhile, Pakistan stayed out of the Yemen conflict, instead declaring that it would remain neutral. Then, in December last year, Islamabad surprised many observers when it announced that it opposed any attempt to topple Syrian President Bashar al Assad's regime. Speaking with the media, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry said, "Pakistan is also against foreign military intervention in Syria and fully supports the territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic."

These major developments have increasingly irked Saudi Arabia, which has at any rate been tilting toward Pakistan's arch-rival India. But some independent analysts argued that Pakistan's foreign policy was now changing for the better. They claimed that the country has now realized it can no longer use militant groups as an "extension of its national security policy."

Unfortunately, the turnaround proved short-lived; militancy has once again strained the country's ties with India and Afghanistan following tragic incidents in both countries, for which Pakistan was blamed. Ironically, Saudi Arabia, which has its own links to jihad, also raised doubts about Pakistan, with the Saudi Interior Ministry identifying the Jeddah bomber as Pakistani national Abdullah Qlazar Khan.

For their part, Pakistani authorities vigorously deny any connection to the attacks and insist that their soil is not being used against other countries. They cite the Pathankot attack, noting that the director general of India's National Investigation Agency, Sharad Kumar himself said that there was no evidence to suggest that the Pakistani government was involved.

Still, in recent months, Pakistan's Defense Minister Khawaja Asif has spoken on television of his regret that relations with the U.S. are deteriorating, while criticizing Pakistan's entry into the war of Afghanistan in 1979 to oust the Soviet Union and its nurturing of terrorists after 9/11, when the U.S. invaded Afghanistan.

Principles Underlying Our policy :

Washington, D.C.-based political analyst and author Aparna Pande told The Diplomat: "There are two underlying principles of Pakistan's foreign policy and these principles have remained paramount right from the creation of the country till today. The first is the desire to 'escape India' in the sense of creating a national identity that was anti-India. Thus, Pakistan has preferred to be referred to as a Greater Middle Eastern country not a South Asian one, because South Asian would mean accepting that Pakistan was part of the greater Indian civilization. The second principle underlying Pakistan's policy is the desire for parity with India – not sovereign equality which every country has but parity – and this is specifically with respect to military parity (both conventional and nuclear) and economic parity."

She continued: "While every country adjusts its foreign policy somewhat depending on changing circumstances, and Pakistan is no exception, I have yet to see any paradigm shift in Pakistan's foreign policy."

"Pakistan still continues to use jihad as an element of its foreign policy with respect to India and Afghanistan. Its policy towards the United States is still aimed at obtaining military hardware (such as F-16s), economic assistance, and making promises it is unwilling or unable to keep (like promising talks with Afghan Taliban that have yet to result in anything concrete, promising action against jihadi groups but still differentiating between good and bad jihadis) a reason like)

• **Conclusion:**

Contentment and discontent, in order to see things positively, we should ourselves be an optimist. In light of the above-stated facts, I conclude the scenario of Pakistan's current situation as:

Stability of the Government and upper elites of Pakistan is directly proportional to Pakistan's moral stability across the world. The upper elites and the government lack the ability to understand the need for the betterment of Pakistan. On the other side, the lower class is striving to survive, they are already living from hand to mouth and can hardly fulfil their basic needs. In addition, the new tax reforms prove to be unbearable for them. Recently the government has taken some measures in this regards, but the action requires time to be implemented fully. They should take some alternative measures to temporarily cater to the situation in a faster way.

In this Foreign policy is dependent upon a domestic policy of any country. A domestically stable country can successfully exert its influence on others; whereas, internally weak nations get easily coerced by others in the international strategic environment. In Pakistan, domestic political instability has since long been affecting the formulation and execution of foreign policy. Therefore, the biggest challenge for the new government on international front relates to its domestic stability which is directly proportional to foreign policy success. Domestic stability needs economic progress in the country. The incumbent government is working hard for economic prosperity. However, the external front is being neglected which is astonishing. This

behaviour would further deteriorate both domestic and foreign conditions. Success can only be realized if all the stakeholders collaboratively devise comprehensive strategies to cope with the domestic as well as foreign policy challenges.

Webliography :

- ✓ <https://thediplomat.com/2016/08/the-dilemma-of-pakistans-foreign-policy/>
- ✓ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1428503>
- ✓ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/72560/foreign-policy-and-its-imperatives>
- ✓ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1412122>